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UNCLAS ABUJA 000211

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: ICAO SECURITY MINISTERIAL

REF: (A) STATE 3397

1. Summary. The GON supports USG positions within ICAO for the February Security Ministerial. Minister of Aviation plans to lead the GON delegation in Montreal. End Summary.

2. Econoff presented Reftel demarche January 9 to Chief I.E. Awodu, Technical Assistant to the Minister of Aviation. Awodu could not immediately comment on Nigeria's position vis-a-vis the February ICAO Security Ministerial, but provided a written response on January 18. The Ministry of Aviation and the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority noted the achievements of the AVSEC Panel and agreed that Nigeria and other ICAO member-states should implement the newly revised standards as contained in Amendment 10 to Annex 17. The NCAA "already ensures that checks are carried out at both domestic and international airports in the country" to prevent unlawful interference.

3. One of the NCAA's highest priorities is to strengthen cockpit security. Additional items have been prohibited from aircraft cabins, cockpit doors are to be reinforced and must be locked at all times, and access to the flight deck is now limited to operational crew. NCAA believes that an ICAO mandated standard to protect the cockpit from forcible entry is a must.

4. NCAA fully supports ICAO's Security Audit Program "to ensure a uniform level of security worldwide." NCAA endorses the methodologies already in use for the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Program, which include mandatory and universal participation and the sharing of non-sensitive information between member-states. NCAA agrees that program administration should be carried out by the AVSEC Mechanism with a separate section dedicated to the Audit Program. NCAA also agrees that to ensure universality of the program at this time, it may not be regionalized. NCAA supports the compliance mechanism currently contained in the Universal Safety Audit Program. Although Nigeria supports voluntary and unrestricted funding of the Audit Program, the GON does not have resources to commit.

5. If desired, Post will fax the Department full text of the GON reply upon receipt of a contact name and fax number.

6. Minister of Aviation (Dr.) Kema Chikwe plans to lead the GON delegation to the February Security Ministerial in Montreal.
Jeter